

6. ✓	(b) (6)	Lt. Comdr, USN	Navy Cross	Comdr. Air Force, Pac.Flt.
	Massey, Lance E.	Lt. Comdr, USN	DFC Posthumously	" " " " "
	Lindsey, Eugene E.	Lt. Comdr, USN	DFC Posthumously	" " " " "
	(b) (6)	Lt, USN	DFC	" " " " "

Cause: Adm. Nimitz says "specific facts, hitherto unknown, now brought to the attention of the CinC, Pacific Fleet shows that:

(b) (6) destroyed 4 enemy two-engined bombers and 3 enemy fighters being serviced on the field;

Lt. Comdr. Massey scored a bomb hit on an 18,000 ton transport;

Lt. Comdr. Lindsey scored several bomb hits on a 12,000 ton auxiliary vessel as well as on hangars;

(b) (6) destroyed an enemy hangar.

"It is believed that the awards previously given the subject officers were insufficient and if the present recommended action is taken, the prior awards should be cancelled."

7. ✓	(b) (6)	Capt. (E) USCG	Headquarters	Cons. and rec.	Chf. BuPers
		Avia. Cadet	Anacostia	" " "	" "

Cause: Entered a burning Pullman, crawled around in under it to bring out the injured; displayed personal bravery, quick thinking, calm direction and concerted action at the B & O R.R. wreck near Frederickton the morning of Sept. 24, 1942.

(Letter written by Vice Pres., F.D. Adams, Paine & Williams Co., Cleveland).

MASSEY, Lance Edward (MISSING)

Lt Comdr USN

US: *Sancti Yorktown*

Midway June 1942

Recommended for NAVY CROSS by CinC Pac Serial 19 CinC Pac
File P15(1) of July 20, 1942—CinC Pac File P15(1)/(05)
Serial 3277 of August 16, 1942.

*no change 1942
Ser. 3594-0112-30-46 App. Adm. Jan*

Awarded: NAVY CROSS--Sept. 11, 1942 Bd.Awds. Meeting
Appr.Sept.17,1942 by Sec.Navy. 7

For extraordinary heroism & distinguished service as Comdr
of VT-3 in Battle of Midway. On June 4, 1942 he led his
squadron in a torpedo attack against Jap naval forces.
In the face of intense anti-aircraft fire & overwhelming
fighter opposition, he continued to press home his attack
with heroic determination beyond the point where it (OVER)

became definitely apparent that in order successfully to carry out his mission he would probably sacrifice his life. In so doing his squadron was enabled to score direct hits on two enemy aircraft carriers which contributed greatly to the decisive victory of our forces. The courage & utter disregard for personal safety, displayed by him in this attack, were in keeping with the highest traditions of the naval service.

1/9/43 Orig. cit and DEC (engraved) sent to next of kin (wife) (b) (6) Hubbard Grove Ranch Descano, Calif.

24 SEP 1981

The Honorable Paul Trible
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Trible:

This is in reply to your letter of 10 September 1981 on behalf of Captain Eugene C. Rook, United States Navy (Retired), concerning legislation to authorize The Medal of Honor for Commander John C. Waldron, Lieutenant Commander Eugene E. Lindsey, and Lieutenant Commander Lance E. Massey. 63291

I have been advised that the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations has conducted a thorough review of the records of all three officers and found that Navy Crosses were awarded to all three for their actions on June 4, 1942.

In Commander Waldron's case, he was recommended for the Medal of Honor on June 17, 1942, along with 28 other members of his command. On July 18, 1942, Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet recommended that Commander Waldron and his 13 pilots be awarded Navy Crosses and that the Distinguished Flying Cross be awarded to the 15 crew members. The Secretary of the Navy approved the awards as recommended by Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet. There was a great deal of interest by Commander Waldron's classmates and congressmen from his home state of South Dakota in late 1942. Based on that correspondence, Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, was asked to review his previous recommendation. On March 1, 1943, Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, stated "... The Board, upon review of other air groups which participated in the Battle of Midway, judges that the action of Commander John C. Waldron, U. S. Navy, when reviewed with comparable cases, did not and does not warrant the award of the Congressional Medal of Honor. The Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, appreciated the great services rendered by this officer to the Navy and his country in the Battle of Midway; and that the award of the Navy Cross was based on a comparable performance of duty of other officers in this action. The decision of the Board is therefore approved and the Navy Cross is considered the appropriate award."

Following World War II, the Navy Department Board of Review for Decorations and Medals (Horne Board) reviewed the award recommendations for all awards made during World War II. No change was recommended for the awards made to Commander Waldron, Lieutenant Commander Lindsey, or Lieutenant Commander Massey.

Everyone agrees that the Battle of Midway was a great naval victory and it was made possible by the heroic conduct of many brave people. The Navy Cross is our second highest award and should be a source of pride to all recipients and their families.

In view of the previous reviews of the awards made to Commander Waldron, Lieutenant Commander Lindsey, and Lieutenant Commander Massey, and the level of award made, the Department of the Navy could not support legislation to award Medals of Honor.

In view of their expressed interest in this matter, this information has also been provided to the Honorable Strom Thurmond, the Honorable Daniel Patrick Moynihan, the Honorable Henry M. Jackson and the Honorable Gary A. Lee.

If I can be of further assistance please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

M. P. ALEXICH
Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy
Assistant Vice Chief of Naval Operations
Director of Naval Administration

Blind copy to:
SECNAV (1U086038)
Op-003S
DOD 54396

Orig: S.J. Kirk, 09B33, 55589, X54123
Typd: C. Carpenter, 09B35, 4D469, X52040
WPC PROJECT: #11U92
24 September 1981

For file in BUPERS
Record 1p 05B19

Ser 09B33/321777

14 SEP 1981

The Honorable Daniel Patrick Moynihan
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Moynihan:

This is in reply to your letter of 21 August 1981 addressed to the Secretary of Defense on behalf of Captain Noble W. Abrahams, United States Navy (Retired), concerning legislation to authorize the Medal of Honor for Commander John C. Waldron, Lieutenant Commander Eugene E. Lindsey and Lieutenant Commander Lance E. Massey. Your letter was referred to my office for reply.

My staff has thoroughly reviewed the records of all three officers and found that Navy Crosses were awarded to all three for their actions on 4 June 1942.

In Commander Waldron's case, he was recommended for the Medal of Honor on 17 June 1942 along with 28 other members of his command. Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet on 18 July 1942 recommended that Commander Waldron and his 14 pilots be awarded Navy Crosses and that the Distinguished Flying Cross be awarded to the 15 crew members. The Secretary of the Navy approved the awards as recommended by Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet. There was a great deal of interest by Commander Waldron's classmates and congressmen from his home state of South Dakota in late 1942. Based on that correspondence, Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, was asked to review his previous recommendation. On 1 March 1943, Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, stated "... The Board upon review of other air groups which participated in the Battle of Midway judges that the action of Lieutenant Commander John C. Waldron, U.S. Navy when reviewed with comparable cases did not and does not warrant the Award of the Congressional Medal of Honor. The Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, appreciates the great services rendered by this officer to the Navy and his country in the Battle of Midway; and that the award of the Navy Cross was based on a comparable performance of duty of other officers in this action. The decision of the Board is therefore approved and the Navy Cross is considered the appropriate award."

Following World War II, the Navy Department Board of Review for Decorations and Medals (Horne Board) reviewed the award recommendations for all awards made during World War II. No change

was recommended for the awards made to Commander Waldron,
Lieutenant Commander Lindsey or Lieutenant Commander Massey. .

In view of the previous reviews of the awards made to Commander
Waldron, Lieutenant Commander Lindsey and Lieutenant Commander
Massey and the level of award made, the Navy Department could
not support legislation to award Medals of Honor.

Sincerely,

M. P. ALEXICH
Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy
Assistant Vice Chief of Naval Operations
Director of Naval Administration

Encl:

(1) Your letter of 21 August 1981
with related correspondence

Blind copy:

OP-003S 114500 842
SECNAV (1U034960)
DOD (53363)



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20350

IN REPLY REFER TO

LA-11:mel
Ser: 1U551752

4 SEP 1981

Dear Senator Thurmond:

This is in further reply to your letters on behalf of Captain Noble W. Abrahams, United States Navy (Retired), who wrote to you regarding legislation to authorize the Medal of Honor for Commander John C. Waldron, Lieutenant Commander Eugene E. Lindsey, and Lieutenant Commander Lance E. Massey.

I have been advised that the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations has conducted a thorough review of the records of all three officers and found that Navy Crosses were awarded to all three for their actions on June 4, 1942.

In Commander Waldron's case, he was recommended for the Medal of Honor on June 17, 1942, along with 28 other members of his command. On July 18, 1942, Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet recommended that Commander Waldron and his 13 pilots be awarded Navy Crosses and that the Distinguished Flying Cross be awarded to the 15 crew members. The Secretary of the Navy approved the awards as recommended by Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet. There was a great deal of interest by Commander Waldron's classmates and congressmen from his home state of South Dakota in late 1942. Based on that correspondence, Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, was asked to review his previous recommendation. On March 1, 1943, Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, stated "... The Board, upon review of other air groups which participated in the Battle of Midway, judges that the action of Commander John C. Waldron, U. S. Navy, when reviewed with comparable cases, did not and does not warrant the award of the Congressional Medal of Honor. The Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, appreciated the great services rendered by this officer to the Navy and his country in the Battle of Midway; and that the award of the Navy Cross was based on a comparable performance of duty of other officers in this action. The decision of the Board is therefore approved and the Navy Cross is considered the appropriate award."

Following World War II, the Navy Department Board of Review for Decorations and Medals (Horne Board) reviewed the award recommendations for all awards made during World War II. No change was recommended for the awards made to Commander Waldron, Lieutenant Commander Lindsey, or Lieutenant Commander Massey.

Everyone agrees that the Battle of Midway was a great naval victory and it was made possible by the heroic conduct of many brave people. The Navy Cross is our second highest award and should be a source of pride to all recipients and their families.


LA-11:mel
Ser: 1U553800
4 SEP 1981

In view of the previous reviews of the awards made to Commander Waldron, Lieutenant Commander Lindsey, and Lieutenant Commander Massey, and the level of award made, the Department of the Navy could not support legislation to award Medals of Honor.

If I can be of further assistance please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely yours,

A. K. KNOIZEN
Rear Admiral, US Navy
Chief of Legislative Affairs

Captain Noble W. Abrahams, USN (Ret.)
Cayuga View Road
Trumansburg, New York 14886
Copy to: (Blind)
CNO (OP-09B33) 
LA-62A



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20350

IN REPLY REFER TO

LA-11:mel
Ser: 1U553800

4 SEP 1981

Dear Captain Abrahams:

This is in further reply to your letter of August 12, 1981, and your most recent letter of August 27, regarding legislation to authorize the Medal of Honor for Commander John C. Waldron, Lieutenant Commander Eugene E. Lindsey, and Lieutenant Commander Lance E. Massey.

I have been advised that the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations has conducted a thorough review of the records of all three officers and found that Navy Crosses were awarded to all three for their actions on June 4, 1942.

In Commander Waldron's case, he was recommended for the Medal of Honor on June 17, 1942, along with 28 other members of his command. On July 18, 1942, Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet recommended that Commander Waldron and his 13 pilots be awarded Navy Crosses and that the Distinguished Flying Cross be awarded to the 15 crew members. The Secretary of the Navy approved the awards as recommended by Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet. There was a great deal of interest by Commander Waldron's classmates and congressmen from his home state of South Dakota in late 1942. Based on that correspondence, Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, was asked to review his previous recommendation. On March 1, 1943, Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, stated "... The Board, upon review of other air groups which participated in the Battle of Midway, judges that the action of Commander John C. Waldron, U. S. Navy, when reviewed with comparable cases, did not and does not warrant the award of the Congressional Medal of Honor. The Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, appreciated the great services rendered by this officer to the Navy and his country in the Battle of Midway; and that the award of the Navy Cross was based on a comparable performance of duty of other officers in this action. The decision of the Board is therefore approved and the Navy Cross is considered the appropriate award."

Following World War II, the Navy Department Board of Review for Decorations and Medals (Horne Board) reviewed the award recommendations for all awards made during World War II. No change was recommended for the awards made to Commander Waldron, Lieutenant Commander Lindsey, or Lieutenant Commander Massey.

Everyone agrees that the Battle of Midway was a great naval victory and it was made possible by the heroic conduct of many brave people. The Navy Cross is our second highest award and should be a source of pride to all recipients and their families.

09B33

CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS

27 August 1981

Dear Mick,

Thank you for your letter of 19 August 1981 concerning a movement to obtain posthumous Medals of Honor for the leaders of the three carrier torpedo squadrons at the Battle of Midway.

Recently there has been congressional interest in these cases and my staff has thoroughly reviewed all three records and found that Navy Crosses were awarded to the three officers (Commander John C. Waldron, Lieutenant Commander Eugene E. Lindsey and Lieutenant Commander Lance E. Massey).

In Commander Waldron's case, he was recommended for the Medal of Honor on 17 June 1942 along with 28 other members of his command. Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet on 18 July 1942 recommended that Commander Waldron and his 12 pilots be awarded Navy Crosses and that the Distinguished Flying Cross be awarded to the 15 crew members. The Secretary of the Navy approved the awards as recommended by Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet. There was a great deal of interest by Commander Waldron's classmates and congressmen from his home state of South Dakota in late 1942. Based on that correspondence, Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, was asked to review his previous recommendation. On 1 March 1943, Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, stated "... The Board upon review of other air groups which participated in the Battle of Midway judges that the action of Lieutenant Commander John C. Waldron, U. S. Navy when reviewed with comparable cases did not and does not warrant the award of the Congressional Medal of Honor. The Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, appreciated the great services rendered by this officer to the Navy and his country in the Battle of Midway; and that the award of the Navy Cross was based on a comparable performance of duty of other officers in this action. The decision of the Board is therefore approved and the Navy Cross is considered the appropriate award."

Following World War II, the Navy Department Board of Review for Decorations and Medals (Horne

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8/28

pp. 141, 151, 177, 178, 191, 192): by his daring initiative in setting his own fatefully accurate course, he alone of Air Group 8 found the enemy carriers (p.143) at the grave risk of a GCM and wreckage of his entire career if he had failed. He was 25 minutes ahead of Lindsey's Torpedo Squadron 6 (Enterprise), 50 minutes ahead of Massey's Torpedo Squadron 3 (Yorktown) (see blue page diagram inside back cover): 62 minutes ahead of Lt. Cdr. Wade McClusky's dive bombers (Enterprise) (p.164), and 65 minutes ahead of Lt. Cdr. Maxwell Leslie's dive bombers (Yorktown) (p.168).

To those others who so deservingly were awarded the MEDAL OF HONOR, such as Admiral Isaac C. Kidd, U.S.N., Cdr. Div. One; Captain Frank Van Valkenburg, U.S.N., CO, U.S.S. Arizona; Captain Mervin S. Bennion, U.S.N., CO, U.S.S. West Virginia, all on 7 December 1941, were awarded the MEDAL OF HONOR, so should be added the names of Lt. Col. James Doolittle, Clay Drexler, etc. If they merited the MEDAL OF HONOR, even more is it deserved by the naval aviator, who above and beyond the call of duty jeopardized his entire career in his iron determination to find the enemy carriers, to press home the attack with fire and valor; with no air cover whatever, he knowingly charged into certain death; "he gave his life gallantly in defense of his (and our) country". The cumulative effect of the intrepid charges of that 4 June, 1942, first by Waldron's Torpedo 8 at 09:20; by Lindsey's Torpedo 6 at 09:45, and by Massey's Torpedo 3 at 10:15 cleared the air completely of Jap Zeros. Their virtual annihilation and unsurpassed self-sacrifice thus opened wide the gates for Wade McClusky's Enterprise dive bombers at 10:22 and Maxwell Leslie's Yorktown dive bombers at 10:25 to pour through. Within a 6 minute period their targets, 3 major Jap carriers - proud veterans of the devastating attack on Pearl Harbor - became blazing wrecks, symbols of poetic justice and the wrath of the avenging angels launched that unforgettable Fourth Day of June from the heaving decks of the few, eager battle-scarred ships flying the battle-torn flag of our anxious, but determined country. On those angel wings rode the destiny of a noble nation and a righteous course. Upon the slim thread of Midway hung the entire Pacific War.

The posthumous award in 1982, Midway's 40th anniversary year, of the MEDAL OF HONOR, first to John Waldron, then to Eugene Lindsey and Lance Massey, would only discharge long overdue recognition positively owed by America to these noble American patriots for their valorous achievement ABOVE AND BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY.

This posthumous award be widely proclaimed, done with the fullest, most appropriate ceremonies on Worden Field at the Naval Academy in the presence of the President (if possible), the Chief of Naval Operations, Commandant of the Marine Corps, the Governor of Maryland, Secretary of Defense, Secretary of the Navy, Members of the Senate and House, the Brigade of Midshipmen, members of the Supreme Court, the Washington based Marine Corps Ceremonial Detachment, a platoon each from West Point and the Air Force Academy, relatives and especially survivors of Midway heroes, foreign Military, Naval and Air Attaches, press and media people and include also '24 survivors.

Board) reviewed the award recommendations for all awards made during World War II. No change was recommended for the awards made to Commander Waldron, Lieutenant Commander Lindsey or Lieutenant Commander Massey.

In view of the previous reviews of the awards made to Commander Waldron, Lieutenant Commander Lindsey and Lieutenant Commander Massey and the level of award made, the Navy Department could not support legislation to award Medals of Honor.

Sincerely,


T. B. HAYWARD
Admiral, U. S. Navy

Admiral Robert B. Carney, USN (Ret.)
2801 New Mexico Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20007



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20350

IN REPLY REFER TO
Ser 09B33/321654

AUG 24 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR CHIEF OF LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

Subj: Medal of Honor for CDR John C. WALDRON, LCDR Eugene E. LINDSEY and LCDR Lance E. MASSEY

Ref: (a) OLA R.S. 1U524521 and 1U551752

Encl: (1) Proposed reply to Senator Strom Thurmond

1. Enclosure (1) is forwarded in response to reference (a).
2. The Awards and Special Projects Branch has received telephonic inquiries from Senator Jackson and Congressman Lee of New York on the same subject.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. P. Alexich", is located in the lower right quadrant of the page.

M. P. ALEXICH
Assistant Vice Chief of Naval Operations
Director of Naval Administration

The Honorable Strom Thurmond
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Thurmond:

This is in further reply to your letters of 16 July and 5 August 1981 on behalf of Captain Noble W. Abrahams, United States Navy (Retired), who wrote to you regarding legislation to authorize the Medal of Honor for Commander John C. Waldron, Lieutenant Commander Eugene E. Lindsey and Lieutenant Commander Lance E. Massey.

The Office of the Chief of Naval Operations has conducted a thorough review of the records of all three officers and found that Navy Crosses were awarded to all three for their actions on 4 June 1942.

In Commander Waldron's case, he was recommended for the Medal of Honor on 17 June 1942 along with 28 other members of his command. Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet on 18 July 1942 recommended that Commander Waldron and his ¹³~~14~~ pilots be awarded Navy Crosses and that the Distinguished Flying Cross be awarded to the 15 crew members. The Secretary of the Navy approved the awards as recommended by Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet. There was a great deal of interest by Commander Waldron's classmates and congressmen from his home state of South Dakota in late 1942. Based on that correspondence, Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, was asked to review his previous recommendation. On 1 March 1943,

Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, stated ". . . The Board upon review of other air groups which participated in the Battle of Midway judges that the action of Lieutenant Commander John C. Waldron, U. S. Navy when reviewed with comparable cases did not and does not warrant the award of the Congressional Medal of Honor. The Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, appreciated the great services rendered by this officer to the Navy and his country in the Battle of Midway; and that the award of the Navy Cross was based on a comparable performance of duty of other officers in this action. The decision of the Board is therefore approved and the Navy Cross is considered the appropriate award."

Following World War II, the Navy Department Board of Review for Decorations and Medals (Horne Board) reviewed the award recommendations for all awards made during World War II. No change was recommended for the awards made to Commander Waldron, Lieutenant Commander Lindsey or Lieutenant Commander Massey.

Everyone agrees that the Battle of Midway was a great Naval victory and it was made possible by the heroic conduct of many brave people. The Navy Cross is our second highest award and should be a source of pride to all recipients or their families.

In view of the previous reviews of the awards made to Commander Waldron, Lieutenant Commander Lindsey and Lieutenant Commander Massey and the level of award made, the Navy Department could not support legislation to award Medals of Honor.

ROBT. B. CARNEY
ADMIRAL, UNITED STATES NAVY, RETIRED
2801 NEW MEXICO AVENUE, N. W.
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20007

19 August, 1981

My dear Tom:-

There is a movement afoot, seemingly sponsored by retirees, aimed at obtaining posthumous Medal of Honor awards for the leaders of the three carrier torpedo squadrons at the Battle of Midway.

I was asked to join by contributing my endorsement of the project.

I withheld participation, not because I disagree with the objective, but because I had reservations about the organizational and procedure concept. It was not clear to me that the Navy Department was properly involved.

Also, although I know the Midway story, it is vicarious knowledge because I was earning a living in the ASW business in the North Atlantic at the time.

I know that recommendations for retroactive decorations have historically run into snags.

Were the CNO and the SecNav pushing for these posthumous awards, and were they to indicate interest in my opinion, I would respond pronto. In the meantime I will sit on the sidelines.

If you have comments or guidance they would be most welcome.

as always,

Mike

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

August 5, 1981

RECEIVED

AUG 7 11 51 AM '81

LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
OF THE NAVY

RE: Attached

TO: Legislative Affairs
Office of the Secretary
of the Navy
Washington, D.C. 20350

Gentlemen:

The attached is respectfully referred
to you for such consideration as it may
warrant and for a report thereon in duplicate
if possible.

Your assistance in enabling me to
provide a prompt response to my constituent
is greatly appreciated. PLEASE RETURN THIS
CORRESPONDENCE WITH YOUR REPLY.

Sincerely,

Strom Thurmond

Strom Thurmond
United States Senator

ST/C *Re: Current Inquiry*
Letter of July 16, 1981



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20350

IN REPLY REFER TO

LA-11:mel
Ser: 1U551752

4 AUG 1981

Dear Senator Thurmond:

This is in further reply to your letter of July 16, 1981, on behalf of Captain Noble W. Abrahams, United States Navy (Retired), who wrote to you regarding legislation to authorize the Medal of Honor for Commander John C. Waldron, Lieutenant Commander Eugene E. Lindsey, and Lieutenant Commander Lance E. Massey.

The Office of the Chief of Naval Operations has informed me that it will be necessary to review the records of the three officers and other historical records. Due to the lengthy research involved in such cases, it is anticipated that it will be six to eight weeks before any definite information can be furnished. Please be assured that you will be kept advised on this matter.

As the new Chief of Legislative Affairs, I appreciate your welcoming comments and look forward to meeting you and working with you and your office in the future.

Sincerely yours,

A. K. KNOIZEN
Rear Admiral, US Navy
Chief of Legislative Affairs

The Honorable Strom Thurmond
United States Senate
Washington, D. C. 20510

Copy to: (Blind)
CNO (OP-09B33) ←

VICE ADMIRAL CHARLES W. WILKINS, U. S. N. RET.

CHARLES W WILKINS
DAY 3 B DOGWOOD COURT
ORANGE CITY FL 32763

30 July, 1981

Senator Strom Thurmond
U.S. Senate Committee on Armed Services
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Thurmond:

This letter is to request that you introduce a bill to authorize the posthumous award of the Medal of Honor to Commander John Charles Waldron, USN (deceased).

By a letter from Captain Noble W. Abrahams, USN(Ret.) you have been fully informed of Commander Waldron's extraordinary bravery under heavy fire as he lead his Torpedo Squadron Eight to attack the Japanese ships with no thought of his own life.

Very Respectfully

Charles W. Wilkins

VAdm Charles W. Wilkins, USN(Ret.)

Copies to: Senator Lawton Chiles
Senator Paula Hawkins

525397

Ser 09B33/321214

JUL 29 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHIEF OF LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

Subj: Medal of Honor for CDR John C. Waldron, LCDR Eugene E. Lindsey and LCDR Lance E. Massey

Ref: (a) OLA R.S. 1U 551752

Encl: (1) Proposed reply to Senator Strom Thurmond

1. Enclosure (1) is forwarded in response to reference (a).

M. P. ALEXICH
Assistant Vice Chief of Naval Operations
Director of Naval Administration

Blind copy to (w/encl):
OLA (1U 551752)
CMR (1U 524521)

The Honorable Strom Thurmond
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Thurmond:

This is in reply to your letter of 16 July 1981 on behalf of Captain Noble W. Abrahams, United States Navy (retired) concerning Medal of Honor for Commander John C. Waldron, Lieutenant Commander Eugene E. Lindsey and Lieutenant Commander Lance E. Massey.

It will be necessary to review the records of the three officers and other historical records.

Due to the lengthy research involved in such cases, it is anticipated that it will be six to eight weeks before any definite information can be furnished.

You may expect a further interim report on 25 September 1981 if a final reply cannot be made.

Sincerely,

RAADM. M. F. Leslie,
USN, Ret.,
161 E Avenue
Coronado, CA 92118

Ke-
AUG 1 1981

July 28, 1981

The Honorable Senator Strom Thurmond
Room 209 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Thurmond:

I was delighted some days ago to receive a copy of Commander Rawlins' letter, enclosure (A), of June 29 addressed to Vice Admiral Lawrence and his reply, enclosure (B), of July 7th. These letters refer to the heroic performance of duty at the Battle of Midway of the three Torpedo Squadron Commanders namely: Commander John Charles Waldron, USN, (C.O. of the HORNET'S Torpedo Squadron EIGHT), Commander Eugene E. Lindsey, USN, (C.O. of the ENTERPRISE'S Torpedo Squadron SIX), and Commander Lance E. Massey, USN, (C.O. of the YORKTOWN Torpedo Squadron THREE). Each of these officers, in my opinion, deserve the highest military honor which the nation can bestow and I enthusiastically support this award. I have wondered why such action wasn't taken long ago.

I speak with intimate knowledge of the YORKTOWN Squadrons as I was the senior squadron commander and, as indicated in Commander Rawlins' letter, the Commander of Dive Bombing Squadron THREE. During the prelaunch conference for this battle the YORKTOWN squadrons: myself, Fighting Squadron THREE Commander Jimmy Thach and Torpedo Squadron THREE Commander Lance Massey agreed that the torpedo squadron would require most fighter protection and that six of Thach's planes should accompany them. We considered their mission extremely hazardous because their planes were very slow flying at about 105 knots, they had to fly low over the water thus eliminating maneuvering capability and their 30 caliber machine guns were quite ineffective. In other words, the odds were greatly against them but in spite of this they proceeded with intrepidity and valor befitting the highest traditions of the naval service above and beyond the call of duty. Thach's six planes were simply inadequate to fight off the overwhelming number of enemy fighters which mercilessly shot down all 12 of Torpedo Squadron THREE planes. The remainder of Thach's fighter planes were left

Adm. M. F. Leslie,
USN, Ret.
181 E Avenue
Coronado, CA 92118

at the ship for combat air patrol.

I feel positive in saying that the fate of the 15 HORNET Torpedo Squadron EIGHT planes and the 14 ENTERPRISE Torpedo Squadron SIX planes was very similar to that suffered by the YORKTOWN Torpedo Squadron THREE planes i.e. it was a multiple supreme sacrifice for which the nation can forever refer to with pride and glory.

It is reassuring to learn from your letter of July 16 to Captain Noble Abrahams that you will give careful consideration to fulfillment of our basic hope which is that a Medal of Honor will be awarded to each of the three Torpedo Squadron Commanders; Commander John Charles Waldron, Commander Eugene E. Lindsey and Commander Lance E. Massey for their performance of duty at the cost of their lives and virtual loss of their entire squadrons during the Battle of Midway on June 4, 1942. I am reliably informed that Admiral Arleigh A. Burke, Admiral George W. Anderson, Admiral Thomas H. Moorer and many other very senior officers are supportive in the substance of Commander Rawlins' letter enclosure (A).

Being grateful for your leadership in this undertaking, I am

Very respectfully,

M. F. Leslie

Encs.: (A) Cdr Rawlins' ltr dtd 29 June
(B) VAdm Lawrence ltr " 7 July

Copies: Adm Thomas H. Moorer, USN (Ret.)

VAdm C.E. Ekstrom, " "

Less encls. " G.C. Towner, " "

" T.J. Hedding, " "

Cdr E.W. Rawlins, " "



Capt. (b) (6)
U.S.N. (Retired)
Cayuga View Road
Trumansburg, NY 14886

22 July, 1981

The Honorable Strom Thurmond
Committee on Armed Services
Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. - 20510

1861 4 2 705

Dear Senator Thurmond,

Your very kind letter of July 16, 1981 indicating your interest in the proposal of United States Naval Academy Class of 1934's project to have legislation to authorize the posthumous award of the Medal of Honor to Commander John C. Waldron, LCDR Eugene E. Lindsey and LCDR Lance Massey for their heroic action at the Battle of Midway June 4, 1942 is greatly appreciated. I am sure you will agree with us that they deserve this honor, upon completion of your investigation and will lend your good offices supporting legislation thereto.

Most sincerely,

Paul M. Woodman.

JOHN TOWER, TEX., CHAIRMAN
J. THURMOND, S.C.
GOLDWATER, ARIZ.
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J. JAMES EASTON, NEBR.
CARL LEVIN, MICH.
FRY B. CANNON, STAFF DIRECTOR AND CHIEF COUNSEL

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

July 16, 1981

Rear Admiral Arthur K. Knoizen
Chief, Navy Legislative Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20350

Dear Admiral Knoizen:

It is a pleasure to welcome you to your new assignment. I look forward to meeting you and working with you on Naval matters of interest to my constituents and our defense posture.

Meanwhile, I shall appreciate the Navy's comments and recommendations on the attached proposal, regarding legislation to authorize the Medal of Honor for three Naval heroes in World War II.

With kindest regards and best wishes,

Sincerely,

Strom Thurmond

Strom Thurmond

ST:uc

NAVY
OFFICE OF
LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

JUL 21 11 49 AM '81

RECEIVED

524521

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT
UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21402

15 July 1981

Dear Captain (b) (6),

Thank you for your letter of 3 July asking that I support a movement to win approval for the award of the Medal of Honor to Commanders Waldron, Lindsey and Massey for their heroism at the Battle of Midway.

I have studied the Battle of Midway carefully, and I have been frankly surprised that more Medals of Honor were not awarded for the heroism in that significant engagement.

You can be assured that I would give my strong support to any initiative to assure that these great heroes are properly recognized, and I applaud the efforts of your class in undertaking such a worthwhile project.

Sincerely,

Bill Lawrence

WILLIAM P. LAWRENCE
Vice Admiral, U. S. Navy
Superintendent

Captain Noble W. Abrahams, USN (Ret.)
Cayuga View Road
Trumansburg, New York 14886



Capt. (b) (6)
U.S. Navy (retired)
Cayuga View Road
Trumansburg, NY 14886

(b) (6)

19 July, 1981

Senator Strom Thurmond (R-SC)

to Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee
United States Senate

Washington, D.C. 20510.

JUL 22 1981

Dear Senator Thurmond,

Recently, on July 8, 1981, I mailed a letter to you seeking your assistance and to legislate a bill in Congress to award, posthumously, the Medal of Honor, first to Cdr. John Charles Melton, then to Cdr. Lindsey & Cdr. Massey for their extraordinary courage and skill at the Battle of Midway June 4, 1942.

Enclosed please find copy of Vice Admiral Wm P. Lawrence, USN, Superintendent of the US Naval Academy. I have also contacted Admiral Arleigh Burke who is definitely in accord with this project. I have also written to Senators Pat Moynihan, D-Amato, my Representative Gary Lee. Soon, I will have letters mailed to...

Cannon and Warner to co-sponsor any bill you
might legislate.

We all pray that you will favor our request and
anything you can do will be more than
appreciated.

Sincerely,

Stella Wayne Abrahams-

Captain U.S.N., Retired
Class of 1924.

[



(b) (6)
Capt. (Retired)
U.S.N. (Retired)
Cayuga View Road
Trumansburg, NY 14886

July 8th, 1981

Senator Strom Thurmond, Chairman
Senate Judiciary Committee
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Thurmond,

Under consideration, by the United States Naval Academy Class of 1924, is a very serious undertaking and we need all possible assistance. Knowing, of course, of your willing and loyal support always for the Navy and the deep regard and esteem held for you by your colleagues and by your constituents, of necessity, we turn to you first for support.

The project is this: a vigorous pursuit of our goal to have the MEDAL OF HONOR awarded posthumously to our gallant classmate, Commander John Charles Waldron, who with his Torpedo Squadron 8, located the Japanese Fleet at the Battle of Midway June 4, 1942.

"Think of them, every fourth of June. They and their comrades who survived changed the whole course of the Pacific War." So wrote Samuel Eliot Morison of the "three score young aviators who met flaming death that day in reversing the verdict of the battle" at Midway in 1942. ("The Two Ocean War" by Morison, p. 163).

The unsurpassed heroism of the late Commander John Charles Waldron, U.S.N., who fought and died in the Battle of Midway 4 June, 1942, the eighteenth anniversary of his 1924 graduation from the Naval Academy, surely deserves to live in song and story as long as there is a United States of America, a United States Navy and a United States Naval Academy. Who will disagree that his leading the unsupported attack of the Hornet's VT 8 on the Japanese Carrier Force ranks in valor with the "Charge of the Light Brigade" at Balaklava or Pickett's Division at Gettysburg - and that it exceeded them in immortal achievement?

For Waldron, at this critical hour for our Navy and our country, was our first carrier aviator to find the vital enemies; the first to flash headlong to the attack regardless of cost. VT-8's gallant sacrificial charge was soon followed by the countless other valiant acts of Enterprise and Yorktown Air Groups, all of which flowed and merged into the "Climax at Midway", the Turning Point in the Pacific.

I presume you have read Walter Lord's "Incredible Victory", a fascinating book about the Battle of Midway (see pp. 32, 85-86, 139 et seq), the well-researched story of John C. Waldron's magic blend of skill, faith and valor, equalled or exceeded only by his incredible moral courage above and beyond the call of duty in ignoring the ordered flight course (239 degrees) for Stan Ring's Air Group 8 (see

pp. 141, 151, 177, 178, 191, 192): by his daring initiative in setting his own fatefully accurate course, he alone of Air Group B found the enemy carriers (p.143) at the grave risk of a GCM and wreckage of his entire career if he had failed. He was 25 minutes ahead of Lindsey's Torpedo Squadron 6 (Enterprise), 50 minutes ahead of Massey's Torpedo Squadron 3 (Yorktown) (see blue page diagram inside back cover): 62 minutes ahead of Lt. Cdr. Wade McClusky's dive bombers (Enterprise) (p.164), and 65 minutes ahead of Lt. Cdr. Maxwell Leslie's dive bombers (Yorktown) (p.168).

To those others who so deservingly were awarded the MEDAL OF HONOR, such as Admiral Isaac C. Kidd, U.S.N., Cdr. Div. One; Captain Frank Van Valkenburg, U.S.N., CO, U.S.S. Arizona; Captain Mervin S. Bennion, U.S.N., CO, U.S.S. West Virginia, all on 7 December 1941, were awarded the MEDAL OF HONOR, so should be added the names of Lt. Col. James Doolittle, Clay Drexler, etc. If they merited the MEDAL OF HONOR, even more is it deserved by the naval aviator, who above and beyond the call of duty jeopardized his entire career in his iron determination to find the enemy carriers, to press home the attack with fire and valor, with no air cover whatever, he knowingly charged into certain death; "he gave his life gallantly in defense of his (and our) country". The cumulative effect of the intrepid charges of that 4 June, 1942, first by Waldron's Torpedo 8 at 09:20; by Lindsey's Torpedo 6 at 09:45, and by Massey's Torpedo 3 at 10:15 cleared the air completely of Jap Zeros. Their virtual annihilation and unsurpassed self-sacrifice thus opened wide the gates for Wade McClusky's Enterprise dive bombers at 10:22 and Maxwell Leslie's Yorktown dive bombers at 10:25 to pour through. Within a 6 minute period their targets, 3 major Jap carriers - proud veterans of the devastating attack on Pearl Harbor - became blazing wrecks, symbols of poetic justice and the wrath of the avenging angels launched that unforgettable Fourth Day of June from the heaving decks of the few, eager battle-scarred ships flying the battle-torn flag of our anxious, but determined country. On those angel wings rode the destiny of a noble nation and a righteous course. Upon the slim thread of Midway hung the entire Pacific War.

The posthumous award in 1982, Midway's 40th anniversary year, of the MEDAL OF HONOR, first to John Waldron, then to Eugene Lindsey and Lance Massey, would only discharge long overdue recognition positively owed by America to these noble American patriots for their valorous achievement ABOVE AND BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY.

This posthumous award be widely proclaimed, done with the fullest, most appropriate ceremonies on Worden Field at the Naval Academy in the presence of the President (if possible), the Chief of Naval Operations, Commandant of the Marine Corps, the Governor of Maryland, Secretary of Defense, Secretary of the Navy, Members of the Senate and House, the Brigade of Midshipmen, members of the Supreme Court, the Washington based Marine Corps Ceremonial Detachment, a platoon each from West Point and the Air Force Academy, relatives and especially survivors of Midway heroes, foreign Military, Naval and Air Attaches, press and media people and include also '24 survivors.

Page 3

It is requested that you, sir, introduce legislation and sponsor a bill in the Senate authorizing the posthumous award of the MEDAL OF HONOR, first to Commander John Charles Waldron, U.S.N., Torpedo Squadron 8, U.S.S. Hornet; Lt. CDR. Eugene Elbert Lindsey, U.S.N., Torpedo Squadron 6, U.S.S. Enterprise; and Lt. CDR. Lance Edward Massey, U.S.N., Torpedo Squadron 3, U.S.S. Yorktown.

Your assistance sponsoring such a bill will be tremendously appreciated by the United States Naval Academy Class of 1924 and a long standing error and overlooked reward will be corrected.

Can it be doubted that President Reagan would take enormous pride and satisfaction in awarding these THREE MEDALS OF HONOR in 1982?

Thank you, sir, for your diligent attention to the merits of the above detailed account.

Most Sincerely,

(b) (6)

Captain U.S.N. Retired.
Class of 1924

524521

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT
UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21402

7 July 1981

Dear (b) (6).

Many thanks for your recent letter asking that I support an effort to win approval for the award of the Medal of Honor to Commanders Waldron, Lindsey, and Massey for their heroism at the Battle of Midway.

As I stated in my letter to Vice Admiral Ekstrom last month, I have studied the Battle of Midway carefully, and I have been frankly surprised that more Medals of Honor were not awarded for the heroism in that significant engagement.

You can be assured that I would give my strong support to any initiative to assure that these great heroes are properly recognized.

Warmest regards and best wishes for the future.

Sincerely,

Bill Lawrence

WILLIAM P. LAWRENCE
Vice Admiral, U. S. Navy
Superintendent

Commander Edward White Rawlins, USN (Ref.)
2800 Quebec Street, N.W.
Apt. 319
Washington, D. C. 20008

Enclosure (1)

202-362-0113

2800 Quebec Street, N.W. - Apt. 319 -
Washington, D.C. 20008
Monday 29 June 1981

Vice Admiral William P. Lawrence, U.S. Navy,
Superintendent, United States Naval Academy,
Annapolis, Maryland 21402.

Dear Admiral Lawrence:

"Think of them, reader, every FOURTH OF JUNE. They and their comrades who survived changed the whole course of the Pacific War" -- so wrote Rear Admiral Samuel Eliot Morison, USNR, of the "three score young aviators who met flaming death that day in reversing the verdict of battle" at MIDWAY in 1942. (The Two-Ocean War).

(From the front paper cover of the brilliantly researched volume, "INCREDIBLE VICTORY" by Walter Lord, 1967, Harper & Row, publishers):

"They had no right to win. Yet they did, and in doing so they changed the course of a war. More than that, they added a new name -- MIDWAY -- to that small list that inspires men by example -- like MARATHON, THE ARMYADA, the BARNES. Even against the greatest of odds, there is something in the human spirit -- a magic blend of skill, faith, and valor -- that can lift men from certain defeat to INCREDIBLE VICTORY" (and) "The June 1942 BATTLE OF MIDWAY ... has come to be recognized as the most decisive and significant naval action since Trafalgar!"

I am a 1924 USNA classmate of Vice Admiral "Snede" Ekstrom. What I have to say herein has to my knowledge the concurrence of a growing list of responsible W.W. II retired officers of our Navy, including at this writing:

Vice Admiral G.E. Ekstrom, USN (Ret.)
Vice Admiral George O. Towner, USN (Ret.)
Rear Admiral J.M. Worthington, USN (Ret.)
Rear Admiral H.W. Goodall, USN (Ret.) -- who spent 32 months as a prisoner of war of the Japanese, 1942-1945.
Captain Thomas H. Dyer, USN (Ret.) -- who holds the D.S.I. principally for the brilliant part he played in breaking the Japanese naval ciphers thus leading to the stupendous American naval victory at MIDWAY.
Captain Noble W. Abrahams, USN (Ret.)
Commander William F. Bullis, USNR (Ret.)
Commander Edward White Rawlins, USN (Ret.) -- author of this ltr.

It must not be forgotten that 1982 is the 40th anniversary year of the American Navy's historic, overwhelming victory -- the BATTLE OF MIDWAY. We believe that President REAGAN would experience untold pride and patriotic satisfaction, at the most appropriate time of his choice that year, in posthumously awarding the MEDAL OF HONOR first to Commander John Charles WALDRON, USN, (C.O. the HORNET'S gallant Torpedo Squadron EIGHT), then to Commander Eugene E. LINDSEY, USN, (C.O. ENTERPRISE'S gallant Torpedo Squadron SIX), and to Commander Lance E. MASSEY, USN, (C.O. YORKTOWN'S gallant Torpedo Squadron THREE) for intrepidity ABOVE AND BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY at the cost of their lives in providing (with no fighter cover ~~over~~ whatever, and with utter disregard for themselves) the vital key to victory that FOURTH DAY OF JUNE 1942 at MIDWAY. By their intrepid action above and beyond the call of duty they brought screaming down upon themselves virtually the entire Jap. combat air patrol, thus leaving to Cdr. Wade McClusky's ENTERPRISE dive bombers and to Cdr. Maxwell F. Leslie's YORKTOWN dive bombers, that followed seven minutes after MASSEY, a wide open sky through which they poured, and left three enemy carriers blazing, sinking wrecks -- all within an incredibly brief six minutes -- "no fighters; no antiaircraft. Meanwhile the sky up here was empty, the target wide open." (to our dive Bombers.) -- (p.163, "INCREDIBLE VICTORY").

Enclosure (A)

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Out of HORNET'S Air Group EIGHT that 4 June morning, only Car. John WALDRON'S Torpedo Squadron EIGHT got into action because, at enormous jeopardy to his whole career if wrong, he deliberately ignored the flight course followed by the other squadrons, chose the course he felt certain would take him to the vital enemy carrier force, and (thank God) proved to be right. Consequently his was the first carrier squadron to find them (at 0920), the first to attack (no air cover whatever), the first to catch the full blast of countless Jap. zero's, the first to meet flaming death among all carrier squadrons. Had he followed along with the rest of Air Group EIGHT on their assigned flight course, he, like them, would have missed the action completely that morning - with who knows what grave detriment to our thread-thin cause and the course of battle!

According to "INCREDIBLE VICTORY" Waldron attacked at 0920 (p.143); Lindsey with VT-6 at 0940 (p.148); Massey with VT-3 at 1015 (p.157); McClusky's dive bombers at 1022 (p.164); Leslie's dive bombers at 1025 (p.168).

Knowing your dedication as USNA Superintendent to

- Creating a burning spirit of patriotism in every Midshipman of the Brigade.
- Building the highest sense of pride throughout the Brigade in our Navy and our Country.
- Portraying and refreshing the brilliant, heroic, self-sacrificing acts of valor which have accomplished tremendous ends; namely, WALDRON'S Torpedo Squadron EIGHT (from HORNET), LINDSEY'S Torpedo Squadron SIX (from ENTERPRISE), and MASSEY'S Torpedo Squadron THREE (from YORKTOWN) -- though virtually annihilated that FOURTH DAY OF JUNE by the countless zero's, they provided that indispensable key to victory at MIDWAY, the turning point in the Pacific, in history, and in our Country's destiny.

Can it be doubted that President REAGAN would take enormous pride and find great satisfaction in awarding, in the anniversary of 1982, the MEDAL OF HONOR to each of the gallant Torpedo Squadron Commanders - Commanders Waldron, Lindsey, and Massey - for the heroic sacrifice of themselves and their Squadrons which contributed so signally and so indispensably to the turning of the tide in the Pacific War on the FOURTH OF JUNE 1942?

Very respectfully and sincerely,

Edward White Rawlins
Edward White Rawlins,
Commander, USN (Ret.)

copy to:
X.Ad. Ekstrom
V.Ad. Towner
R.Ad. Worthington
R.Ad. Goodall

(b) (6)

Addendum:
May we earnestly request and urge you to lead vigorously, as you well know how to do, a determined effort to ~~thems~~ win approval of these three richly deserved, very top awards of our Country - the MEDAL OF HONOR -- to WALDRON, LINDSEY, and MASSEY?

Very respectfully,

(b) (6)

Enclosure (A)

Pers-E24-MRT:gap
63292
5 May 1960

From: Chief of Naval Personnel

To: Commanding Officer
USS MASSEY (DD-778)
FPO, New York, New York

Subj: LCDR Lance E. MASSEY, USN (Deceased) correspondence; forwarding of

Ref: (a) Your ltr DD778:DAM:lks Ser: 146 of 17 Mar 1960

Encl: (1) Copy of the Citation for the Navy Cross awarded to subject officer dated 23 Oct 1942
(2) Copy of the Citation for the Distinguished Flying Cross dated 25 Nov 1942
(3) Copy of Presidential Unit Citation awarded the USS ENTERPRISE with copy of BuPers ltr Pers 328.mls of 11 May 1944

1. Enclosures (1) through (3) are forwarded in response to reference (a).

2. In addition to the commendations listed in the enclosures, subject deceased officer is entitled to the following medals and awards:

Purple Heart and Purple Heart Certificate
American Defense Service Medal with Fleet Clasp
American Campaign Service Medal
Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal
World War II Victory Medal

3. The latest information contained in Lieutenant Commander Massey's record shows his next of kin as his wife, (b) (6) of (b) (6). However, information of record shows that correspondence dated 22 June 1948 was returned from this address as unclaimed.

D. R. FREDERICK
By direction

mut

1942 Apr 17 Commanding Torpedo Squadron THREE (duty involving flying).
Rep 1 Apr 1942.
Commissioned regular Lieutenant Commander, to rank from 30 June 1942.

American Defense Service Medal - Fleet Clasp - 8 September 1939 to
7 December 1941.

NAVY CROSS: "For extraordinary heroism as Commander of Torpedo Squadron THREE in action against enemy Japanese forces in the Battle of Midway on June 4, 1942. Leading his squadron in a torpedo plane assault against Japanese naval units, Lieutenant Commander Massey, in the face of intense anti-aircraft fire and overwhelming fighter opposition, pressed home his attack to a point where it became relatively certain that, in order to fulfill his mission, he would probably sacrifice his life. Nevertheless, undeterred by the grave possibilities of such a hazardous offensive, he carried on, with extreme disregard for his own personal safety, until his squadron was enabled to score direct hits on two enemy aircraft carriers. His courageous initiative and self-sacrificing gallantry were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS: "For extraordinary achievement in aerial combat as leader of a group of nine torpedo planes in action against enemy Japanese surface vessels at Kwajalein Atoll, Marshall Islands, February 1, 1942. In the first airborne torpedo attack executed by the United States Navy, Lieutenant Commander Massey, without fighter protection or other distraction to the enemy, daringly led his group in a resolute and purposeful attack against a fully alert enemy. Selecting the largest ship of the enemy concentration as his own target, he boldly defied withering anti-aircraft fire from lesser ships and scored a bomb hit on an 18,000-ton enemy Japanese transport. His expert airmanship and utter disregard for his own personal safety were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

Date of death: (Presumptive: 5 June 1943.) Officially reported missing in action as of 4 June 1942, when the plane of which he was pilot was shot down during the Battle of Midway. (In compliance with Section 5 of Public Law 490, as amended, death is presumed to have occurred on 5 June 1943.)

Place of death: Pacific area.
Cause: Enemy action.

Next of Kin: Wife:

(b) (6)

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY
WASHINGTON

The President of the United States takes pleasure in
presenting the PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION to the

UNITED STATES SHIP ENTERPRISE

for service as set forth in the following

CITATION:

"For consistently outstanding performance and distinguished achievement during repeated action against enemy Japanese forces in the Pacific War Area, December 7, 1941 to November 15, 1942. Participating in nearly every major carrier engagement in the first year of the war, the ENTERPRISE and her Air Group, exclusive of her far-flung destruction of hostile shore installations throughout the battle area, did sink or damage, on her own, a total of 35 Japanese vessels and shoot down a total of 185 Japanese aircraft. Her aggressive fighting spirit and superb combat efficiency are fitting tribute to the officers and men who so gallantly established her as a solid bulwark in defense of the American Nation."

Gilbert and Marshall Islands Raid	February 1, 1942
Wake Island Raid	February 24, 1942
Marcus Island Raid	March 4, 1942
Battle of Midway	June 4-6, 1942
Occupation of Guadalcanal	August 7-8, 1942
Battle of Stewart Islands	August 24, 1942
Battle of Santa Cruz Islands	October 26, 1942
Battle of Solomon Islands	November 14-15, 1942

For the President,


Secretary of the Navy.

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Summary of Action:

As their Commanding Officer Captain Marc A Mitscher USN of the USS Hornet (CV-8) recommended the Medal of Honor (MOH) be awarded to all 15 pilots of Torpedo Squadron 8 (VT-8) who attacked Japanese Naval Forces north of Midway Island on June 4, 1942. Captain Mitscher stated in his after-action report for the Battle of Midway (BOM) dated June 13, 1942: "This Squadron in (sic) deserving of the highest honors for finding the enemy, pressing home its attack, without fighter protection and without diverting dive bomber attacks to draw the enemy fire." In paragraph 21 he continued. "Attention is particularly invited to Enclosures (C) (Recommendations for Awards). Inasmuch as the action covered by this report was an action involving actual combat by aircraft only, as far as this vessel was concerned, and considering the strategic importance of the battle, it is urged that the awards recommended in Enclosure (C) be granted. In particular the Commanding Officer feels that the conduct of Torpedo Squadron Eight, led by an indomitable Squadron Commander, is one of the most outstanding exhibitions of personal bravery and gallantry that has ever come to his attention in the records of the past or present."

In the After-Action Report for the USS Enterprise (CV-6) for the Battle of Midway (BOM) dated June 8, 1942 Captain Murray stated:

"The attack delivered upon enemy carriers by the **torpedo squadrons of our forces** is believed to be without parallel for determined and courageous action in the face of overwhelming odds. These crews were observed to commence their attack against heavy anti-aircraft fire from enemy carriers and supporting vessels while opposed by enemy Zero fighters in large numbers. The enemy fighter opposition was so strong and effective that ten torpedo planes out of fourteen of Torpedo Squadron SIX did not return. It is recommended that the Navy Cross be awarded to each pilot and gunner of Torpedo Squadron SIX who participated in this bold and heroic attack."

In the After-Action Report for Task Force Sixteen for the BOM dated June 16, 1942 Rear Admiral Spruance stated:

"Except for the Hornet dive bombers failing to find the target on the forenoon of 4 June, all operations were conducted approximately as intended, and the work of the carrier squadrons on which the success or failure of the action depended was beyond praise. This applies particularly to the first attack made on 3 CVs about noon on 4 June which decided the action. **The attacks made at this time by the torpedo squadrons, prior to the arrival of the dive bombers, was of an especially gallant nature.**"

In December 1942, the Bureau of Naval Personnel Information Bulletin No 309 awarded the Navy Cross (Posthumously) to Lieutenant Commander Lance Massey as detailed in the following citation:

The President of the United States of America takes pride in presenting the Navy Cross (Posthumously) to Lieutenant Commander Lance Edward Massey (NSN: 0-63292), United States Navy, for extraordinary heroism in operations against the enemy while serving as Pilot of a carrier-based Navy Torpedo Plane and Commanding Officer of Torpedo Squadron THREE (VT-3), attached to the U.S.S. YORKTOWN (CV-5), during the "Air Battle of Midway," against enemy Japanese forces on 4 June 1942. Lieutenant Massey led his squadron in a Torpedo Plane assault against Japanese naval units, in the face of intense anti-aircraft fire and overwhelming fighter opposition. He pressed home his attack to a point where it became relatively certain that in order to fulfill his mission, he would probably sacrifice his life.

Undeterred by the grave possibilities of such a hazardous offensive, he carried on, with extreme disregard for his own personal safety, until his squadron scored direct hits on two enemy aircraft carriers. His self-sacrificing gallantry and fortitude were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country.

Due to the incredible danger every dive bomber and torpedo plane pilot from the USS Enterprise, USS Yorktown, USS Hornet and Midway Island faced on the morning of June 4, 1942, 95 of 98 of them received the Navy Cross. 55 of 98 were reported Missing in Action and subsequently declared Killed In Action. However, no Medals of Honor were awarded for any action over the Japanese fleet that morning.

The purpose of this summary of action is to fully document the complete history of the actions taken by Lieutenant Commander Lance Massey over a period of seven months, from December 7, 1941 to June 4, 1942 that led eleven pilots of VT-3 to follow him in his attack of an overwhelming force, with inadequate fighter support, or any other diverting forces, on June 4, 1942. As will be shown in this SOA the effect of Lieutenant Commander Massey's leadership and his squadron's actions on June 4, 1942 had such a determining factor on victory at Midway that the award of a MOH is the only acceptable award. Furthermore, the strategic importance of the victory at Midway cannot be understated. Without the tactical contributions of Torpedo Squadron Three at Midway it is likely the US Navy would have lost several additional aircraft carriers, ships, aircraft, and the Island of Midway. The Japanese plan was to use the seizure of Midway and the destruction of the remaining US Navy aircraft carriers as a springboard for the invasion of Hawaii. This would have greatly increased the length of the war in the Pacific with hundreds of thousands of additional casualties on both sides.

Preliminary Actions

It is important to understand the difficulties and challenges associated with what Lieutenant Commander Massey did during those seven months. Initially serving as the Executive Officer of Torpedo Squadron Six aboard the USS Enterprise for the first five months of the war he fleeted up to take command of Torpedo Squadron Three on April 14, 1942. As Executive Officer of VT-6 and Commanding Officer of VT-3 Lieutenant Commander Massey taught numerous fledgling pilots the skills necessary for low-level torpedo-launching tactics as best he could. They mastered formation flying and high-level bombing.

The actual torpedo he was to use, the Mark 13, had a maximum speed of 33.5 knots and a range of only 6300 yards. The Japanese carriers VT-3 would see at the BOM had maximum speeds of: Hiryu and Soryu 34 knots, Akagi 31.5 knots, and Kaga 28 knots. These considerations were successfully employed by the Commanders of the Japanese carriers in the tactics they used against the US Navy torpedo squadrons during the battle. The other deficiencies of the Mark 13 included circular or erratic runs, broaching or running too deep, and failure to detonate. The requirements for a successful torpedo drop in 1942 limited the height and speed of the aircraft to 120 feet and 100 mph, making the aircraft a sitting duck for enemy fighter aircraft and/or anti-aircraft fire. In a 1940 fleet gunnery exercise four of ten torpedoes sank and were never seen again, while five more ran erratically. The 10 percent success rate mirrored actual wartime results from February to June 1942 during 11 squadron strength attacks that yielded less than 10 possible hits from 95 known drops. Due to reporting difficulties the number of actual hits and detonations may be even lower. The problems with these torpedoes were well known within the fleet, and yet senior Navy leadership took no action before the war to fix the problems. The

Mark 13 was all they had on the morning of June 4th. Similar problems plagued the submarine launched version of this torpedo. Initially the high miss rate was blamed on the ineptitude of the operators. Eventually senior leadership reported these problems, and this finally caused the Bureau of Ordnance to investigate and redesign both torpedoes. By comparison, the Japanese Type 91 Mod 2 aerial torpedo displayed none of these issues, had a speed of 42 knots, and could be successfully dropped by an aircraft at 235 mph. The Mark 13 torpedo was matched to an obsolete delivery mechanism: the TBD Devastator.

When designed in 1934 the TBD Devastator was a state-of-the-art aircraft. By 1941 it was far eclipsed by its counterpart, the Japanese B5N Kate. The TBD's crew consisted of pilot, bombardier, and radioman gunner. The bombardier did not fly torpedo attack missions. It featured a 30-caliber machinegun fired by the pilot and a centerline 360 degree firing machinegun operated by the radioman gunner. Only 130 were produced. 30 TBDs were lost between initial deliveries in October 1937 and December 1941. The remaining 100 were distributed between seven aircraft carriers and several bases around the Atlantic and Pacific. Due to a shortage of aircraft in the fleet the aircraft were overused and tired. Tactical range with the 2200-pound Mark 13 torpedo was supposedly 435 miles but by 1942 the aircraft never flew and successfully returned from a strike of more than 200 miles. The maximum speed of the TBD was supposedly 206 mph, but the aircraft rarely achieved this speed, even in a dive. The maximum speed of the much more maneuverable Kate was 228 mph. The aircraft, as built, had no armor to protect the crew or self-sealing fuel tanks. These fuel tanks were highly combustible if hit by tracer or cannon fire. These problems and the inherent dangers of torpedo attack were well known from the most junior to the most senior officers. However, none of the commanders could justify sparing the VT squadrons from torpedo attacks against the enemy at this point in the war; it was all hands-on-deck.

On December 7, 1941, the USS Enterprise was returning to Pearl Harbor from a mission to deliver a squadron of Marine fighters to Wake Island. The Enterprise flew part of its Air Group ashore early that morning. These aircraft were attacked by Japanese aircraft raiding Pearl Harbor. At 1649 Enterprise launched a strike against a contact report for the Japanese carrier task force. Then Lieutenant Lindsey participated in this mission. The strike force consisted of 18 TBDs, six dive bombers, and six fighter escorts. Reaching the target area an hour later the group found nothing, and the torpedo-equipped TBDs returned to Enterprise. Due to the scarcity of the torpedoes VT-6 was forced to land aboard the Enterprise with them still attached to their aircraft instead of safely jettisoning them at sea as was done later in the war when the torpedoes were much more plentiful. At 2017 the TBDs and dive bombers started to land on the Enterprise; the first night carrier landings in the US Navy by armed torpedo planes! These landings could only have been successful without the expertise demonstrated by these pilots based upon the training they had received from then Lieutenant Massey.

At approximately 0500 on February 1, 1942 the Commanding Officer of VT-6 Lieutenant Commander Lindsey led nine TBDs loaded with four 500-pound bombs off the flight deck of the USS Enterprise to attack Kwajalein island. Due to the training regimen Lieutenant Commanders Lindsey and Massey had conducted each pilot successfully steered his heavily laden aircraft down the narrow, darkened deck, craning his neck to catch the dim lights hooded at the edges and at the end lift the dead weight of bombs and fuel into the air. Then the pilot had to locate in the three-dimensional darkness the tiny white light on the tail of the plane ahead, assure himself by the dim blue exhaust flames on either side that it was not a star, and join up. He could not ram the throttle forward as he would have liked and

close as rapidly as possible because another pilot was attempting to follow the white light on his own tail and the cumulative effect would spoil the rendezvous. The laden planes circled, climbing in the dark, forming for the flight to the target. Only well trained and practiced airmen could have affected that night's rendezvous of two and a half squadrons without mishap.

Unfortunately, a navigational error on the part of the Air Group Commander alerted the Japanese garrison of the arrival of the Enterprises' aircraft. By the time they began their attack they were greeted by heavy anti-aircraft fire and Japanese fighters. Lieutenant Commander Lindsey reported that there were numerous ships in the lagoon. This alerted the Enterprise to launch the remaining nine torpedo-equipped TBDs under the command of Lieutenant Commander Massey. Lieutenant Commander Lindsey then led his nine TBDs on a masthead attack against a cruiser, five submarines, two merchant ships, and three tankers among scores of smaller vessels. Many were reported smoking, listing or aground when this attack ended. Fifty minutes later the remaining nine TBDs arrived. Lieutenant Commander Massey attacked from 700 feet in a right echelon of echelons, his planes jinking and weaving to dodge the flak. Massey's planes' torpedoes found two of the tankers and one of the merchant ships before two more torpedoes hit the cruiser as it was trying to exit the lagoon. Lieutenant Commander Massey received a Distinguished Flying Cross for being the first American torpedo plane pilot in history to score a torpedo hit against an enemy ship. Despite the heavy anti-aircraft fire all 18 TBDs returned safely to the Enterprise. Upon returning to the Enterprise the first nine TBDs were reloaded with bombs and Lieutenant Commander Lindsey led them on a horizontal bombing attack of shipping at Wotje island. Between 1220 and 1235 these aircraft executed several careful attacks that left the island and the shipping in shambles. All nine TBDs successfully returned to the Enterprise. **Need to check some other sources for damage to Jap ships.**

At 0430 on February 24, 1942 the Enterprise sounded flight quarters for a raid against Wake Island. By 0647 the last TBD of nine led by Lieutenant Commander Lindsey was aloft. En route the TBDs worked up to 12,000 feet to execute a horizontal bombing attack. The other nine TBDs, armed with torpedoes, comprised the reserve in case worthwhile ship targets were discovered. The trip took an hour. A section of TBDs and several dive bombers laid a close pattern of bombs on ten gasoline storage tanks. Seven of the tanks went up in a roiling flair of orange flame and black smoke. Another section of TBDs wiped out a big four-engine seaplane moored south of Peale Island. (Wake Island is composed of three islets: Wake, Peale, and Wilkes). The damage imposed by the Enterprise Air Group (EAG) deprived the Japanese of the use of Wake Island as an effective base for several months. The Enterprise raided Marcus Island on March 4, 1942 but VT-6 was held back in reserve and did not participate in this action.

On April 1, 1942 Lieutenant Commander Massey helped led VT-6 in a practice torpedo attack against the Enterprise at sea near Hawaii. On April 8, 1942, less Lieutenant Commander Massey, VT-6 flew out to the Enterprise to take part in the raid on Tokyo by Lieutenant Colonel Doolittle. On April 14, Lieutenant Commander Massey took command of VT-3. During the next month he led his new squadron on numerous training evolutions operating out of Pearl Harbor. On the morning of May 30, 1942, the newly reorganized Yorktown Air Group (YAG), which included VT-3, flew out to meet the Yorktown as it departed Pearl Harbor for the BOM.

During the six days after leaving Pearl Harbor the pilots of the Yorktown received intelligence briefings on the upcoming battle. The US Navy was reading the Japanese Naval code. The news was not good. Three American aircraft carriers, eight cruisers, and 15 destroyers would be opposed by nearly the

entire Japanese Combined Fleet that included four of their largest, most capable, aircraft carriers featuring the cream of their best pilots and aircrews, four light aircraft carriers, 10 battleships, 13 heavy and 11 light cruisers, 66 destroyers, 20 submarines, and 60 other auxiliary ships. The American plan was to deliver surprise carrier attacks on the Japanese flanks after the Japanese aircraft raided Midway Island. To minimize the chance that spurious radio communications would give away the American carrier's presence, most flight operations during this period were limited to short range anti-submarine and search missions. Bad weather cancelled flight operations for three of the days.

Although the USS Yorktown's and USS Lexington's After-Action Reports from the Battle of the Coral Sea had not been officially circulated, Massey and the other squadron commanders knew the air groups on the Yorktown and the Lexington had divided their fighter strength during the two-day battle. Half of the fighters had flown cover for the slow-moving torpedo planes, and the other half had protected the carrier's dive bombers from attacks from the Japanese Zeros. On May 8, 1942 only four fighters successfully held off a swarm of Zeros allowing VT-5 to launch nine torpedoes, claiming three hits. Over the two-day battle, with the fighter escorts keeping the Zeros busy, all but one of the vulnerable Devastators made it back to their ships.

After dinner on June 3rd Lieutenant Commander Massey met with Lieutenant Commander Thach (CO of VF-3) and Lieutenant Commander Leslie (CO of VB-3) to discuss the fighter escort for the next day. It was decided that the six fighters would accompany VT-3 as they faced the most danger. Lieutenant Commander Thach thought this number of fighters was inadequate for this task.

June 4, 1942

At 0430 on June 4, 1942 the Japanese carriers launched 108 aircraft to attack Midway Island. At 0534 the American carriers heard a voice radio report from a Midway based patrol plane. "Enemy carriers." Another patrol plane reported "Many planes heading Midway. At 0552 a patrol plane reported two carriers and battleships course 135, speed 25 knots, bearing 247 degrees 180 miles from the American carriers. This location placed the Japanese fleet outside of the maximum combat range of the TBDs and fighters. Unknown at the time, and due to an error in navigation by the patrol plane crew, the Japanese were actually 220 miles from the American carriers. Consequently, the American ships attempted to close the distance by heading towards this sighting and increasing speed to 25 knots. On Midway all available attack planes were scrambled and directed toward the Japanese, to include the six TBFs of the VT-8 detachment. None of the 26 Marine fighters on Midway accompanied the attack planes but instead intercepted the incoming Japanese aircraft, where they were slaughtered by the more maneuverable Zeros that were flown by vastly more experienced Japanese pilots.

Aboard the USS Enterprise Admiral Spruance made the decision to launch the Enterprise and Hornet Air Groups at 0700 at would have been maximum range for the TBDs and fighters. Aboard the Yorktown Rear Admiral Fletcher launched an early morning search and awaited further developments.

At 0702 the first aircraft from Midway, the six TBFs of the VT-8 Detachment, began their attack on the Japanese Fleet. Assaulted by 28 Japanese Zeros well outside the Japanese screening vessels Lieutenant Fieberling led them in an attack on the Hiryu. One TBF was immediately disabled, the pilot fearing he was about crash turned towards a light cruiser and fired his torpedo. Bracing for impact the wounded pilot discovered he could still fly the aircraft using his trim tabs. With a dead ball turret gunner, a dead or unconscious radioman, no hydraulics, most of his controls, to include his compass, shot away and

over 70 bullet and 20 mm cannon holes in his aircraft he was the only TBF to return to Midway island. Like the other five pilots, who earned them posthumously, Ensign Earnest was awarded the Navy Cross for this attack. He was given a second Navy Cross for successfully piloting the stricken TBF to Midway. This enabled the first TBF off the production line to be evaluated for battle damage by engineers. Immediately after this attack four Army B-26 bombers also torpedoed the Akagi. Two of those aircraft were also shot down by the Zeros, the others were able to return to Midway but never flew again due to battle damage. Admiral Kusaka, who witnessed these attacks from Akagi, was impressed by the steadfast courage of all these pilots. He had thought only Japanese pilots did things like that. Admiral Nagumo, the commander of the Japanese carrier force, was impressed by the attack of the American torpedo planes. The decadent Americans were not supposed to fight like this. Based upon the concern that similar future attacks from Midway might be successful he made a fateful decision to remove the torpedoes and anti-ship bombs from his reserve aircraft and to rearm them with more effective "land" bombs for a second attack on Midway.

At 0830 the twelve TBDs under Lieutenant Commander Massey started to launch followed by the seventeen dive bombers of VB-3. VT-3 formed up and headed directly for the Japanese fleet. At 0905 the six fighter escorts launched. The YAG made a running rendezvous on their way to the target. VT-3 flew at 2500 feet. Two fighters flew directly behind VT-3 at 3500 feet with four more above them at 5500 feet. The dive bombers flew above them at 14,500 feet.

At 0918 VT-8 from the Hornet began their attack. The four big Japanese carriers went to their maximum speed and turned away from VT-8. This presented a narrower target and lengthened the time it took for the 110 knot TBDs to reach a satisfactory position for their torpedo drops. A drop from any aft angle, and the ability of the slower torpedo to catch up to the target before it exhausted its fuel, spelled failure. VT-8 had to work their way around to attack from bow angles. One after another the TBDs fell as the Zeros attacked. Eventually Lieutenant Commander Waldron's plane spouted flames and headed for the water. Waldron was last seen standing up in his cockpit the flames engulfing him. Finally, a wounded Ensign Gay, with a wounded or dead radioman-gunner, was the only remaining aircraft. None had turned away. At 800 yards Ensign Gay launched his torpedo at the Soryu and was finally able to take evasive action. Losing sight of the torpedo he flew directly over the carrier's flight deck and then over the stern. The Zeros caught up with him again and shot him down. Ensign Gay was the only survivor of the 30 VT-8 aircrew. It was all over by 0940. Ensign Gay's torpedo missed but the entire area around the Japanese fleet was covered with the smoke of many ships maneuvering at high speed to avoid VT-8, smoke screens thrown up by Japanese ships to conceal or shield their aircraft carriers, and the black puffs of anti-aircraft fire. Many of the Zeros were now low on ammunition, especially the deadly explosive 20 mm cannon rounds, or low on fuel and needed to return to their carriers. It is believed some of the Zeros fell to the guns of the radiomen. Below decks the rearming of aircraft had to be suspended while all the carriers made radical high speed evasive maneuvers, thereby delaying the planned Japanese strike on the recently discovered American carriers.

The 14 TBDs of VT-6 from the USS Enterprise were next. Having lost contact with the rest of their air group they plodded on course 240. At 0940 they detected the smoke caused by VT-8's attack and adjusted their heading to the right (west) to attack the Japanese fleet. Starting about 15 miles out the Zeros began their deadly attacks. Again, the Japanese carriers turned away from the incoming TBDs. Again, no TBDs turned back. At 0958 the five remaining TBDs launched their torpedoes 500-800 yards away from the Akagi and Kaga, but the attack angles were bad and the anti-aircraft fire heavy. Adroit

shiphandling by these carriers, and the unreliable torpedoes assured no hits. The five surviving TBDs cleared the hell of the Japanese fleet. It was all over by 1000. One TBD ditched before the bullet-riddled others were able to return to the Enterprise. Of the four that returned, one was so irreparably damaged it was immediately pushed over the side. Again, the Japanese fleet was covered with the smoke of combat and the rearming of the strike aircraft was negatively affected by the radical maneuvering of the ships. Respotting of the strike aircraft from the hangar deck to the flight deck could not happen as the flight deck was dedicated to landing, servicing, and relaunching the Zeros. Both torpedo squadron attacks had focused all the Japanese Combat Air Patrol (CAP) to low altitude, which set the stage for the next portion of the battle.

At 1003 VT-3 spotted the smoke from the VT-6 attack and altered course to the right (west). Noticing this, the fighters and dive bombers altered their course accordingly. At this point in time VT-3 was 30 miles away from the Japanese carrier force. Lieutenant Commander Massey's plan was for the first division to attack the second carrier in column. The second division was to attack the first carrier in column. Each division was to split up into two three-plane sections and approach the target from dead ahead. The number two planes of each of the sections in the two divisions were to make their attacks on the starboard bow. The number three planes of each section were to make their attacks on the port side of their respective targets. Since the Japanese task force was headed roughly northeast, Lieutenant Commander Massey further altered their course to the north to attain bow shots. The Japanese carriers altered their course to the northwest, away from VT-3. Approximately 20-25 miles from the Japanese carriers the first Zeros hit. Lieutenant Commander Massey reported he was ready to make a coordinated attack with the dive bombers. He then reported VT-3 was under attack by Zeros. VT-3s fighter support was overwhelmed, had to fight for their lives, and were unable to assist the TBDs. But having escort fighters reduced the number of Zeros attacking VT-3. Almost immediately the first TBD was shot down. Recently analyzed Japanese records show that between 39 and 43 Zeros attacked the 12 TBDs and 6 F4Fs. Lieutenant Commander Massey then led the squadron in a shallow dive to 150 feet to build up speed and he began evasive action.

As they had done all morning the Zeros knew their business and initially concentrated on the leading aircraft in order to decapitate the leadership in the hopes this would demoralize the remaining aircraft. A Zero approached from directly ahead, opening fire at extreme range. Lieutenant Commander Massey was focusing on deploying his squadron and adjusting its flight path, so he did not react to the Zero's fire and his plane was hit, burst into flames, and headed for the water. Lieutenant Commander Massey stood up in his seat as the aircraft crashed into the sea and disappeared. Undeterred, Machinist Wilhelm Esders immediately took over and continued the attack. A third TBD went down. VT-3 entered long distance anti-aircraft fire range, but the Zeros disregarded the danger posed by their own flak and continued to hammer at the TBDs, focused on destroying this threat, while three squadrons of dive bombers approached at altitude and at greater speed. Due to their continuing loss of numbers VT-3 was forced to concentrate on the Hiryu. None turned back. When they entered Hiryu's machinegun range the Zeros finally backed off for a while. Five TBDs got close enough to drop their torpedoes, turned and headed for home. Due to either excellent shiphandling or torpedo malfunctions none of the torpedoes exploded or hit the Hiryu. Unaware of the threat from above the Zeros resumed their attack on the withdrawing TBDs and continued attacking for more than 20 miles before turning back. Three more TBDs were lost, the remaining two were barely flying when the CAP left them. By 1040 it was all over. Both surviving TBDs were so damaged they were forced to ditch on their way back to the Yorktown.

Unnoticed, at 1020 the dive bombers of the USS Yorktown began their attack on the Soryu. At the same time, the dive bombers of the USS Enterprise, having finally found the Japanese fleet, began their attacks on the Akagi and Kaga. Unmolested by any Japanese fighters until they pulled out of their dives, the dive bombers had free rein. In five minutes, the flight decks and hangar bays of these three carriers were exploding from bombs dropped by the dive bombers. The American bombs exploded the bombs and torpedoes on the Japanese aircraft and the ordnance that had been removed from the aircraft but had not been moved back to the magazines due to the chaos of the American torpedo bomber attacks. Each carrier would sink within the next 24 hours. Although planes from the Hiryu would force the abandonment and eventual demise of the Yorktown, the Hiryu would be left a smoldering hulk by a second attack from the dive bombers later that day.

Undeniable Facts and the Role VT-3 Performed in Victory

The American victory at Midway was the turning point in the war. Until Midway the Japanese were on the offensive, after Midway they were on defense for the remainder of the war. At the time the Navy's awards board downgraded the recommendation of the Medal of Honor to a Navy Cross for Lieutenant Commander Waldron and each of the pilots of his squadron, much of the historical information that is now available was not known. VT-8 was one of several squadrons where many heroes of the battle gallantly gave their lives and were posthumously awarded the Navy Cross. Of the 100-aircrew assigned to US Navy torpedo bombers, 86 perished. A majority of the remaining were wounded. Since then, the testimony of hundreds of witnesses on both sides resulted in approximately 20 books and hundreds of articles that have dissected every aspect of the battle. There are two general points to be addressed here. The first are the facts and results of the battle no historian would disagree with. The second set of judgements are accepted by most, but not all historians, as to the pivotal role VT-3 played in the victory.

The first American force that attacked the Japanese carriers, the VT-8 TBF Detachment, attacked with such bravado that Admiral Nagumo decided he needed to eliminate the threat of additional Midway based aircraft and ordered the rearming of his reserve aircraft. Later, when Japanese scouts reported the presence of US Navy forces on his flank, he countermanded this order. The result of this change was he could not immediately launch his reserve against the American fleet and the presence of large amounts of ordnance in their hanger bays that the Japanese did not have the time to return to their magazines.

The TBD, and even the newer TBF, could not survive an extended engagement against superior numbers of Zeros without fighter support. Lieutenant Commander Massey and the other squadron commanders on the USS Yorktown knew this but, insufficient numbers of fighters were assigned to escort VT-3.

The information on the attacks of VT-8 and VT-6 was included to show the losses and results from these similar attacks were also grievous, and only mitigated somewhat by the fact that, once VT-8 had attacked, some of the Zeros had to return for ammunition and fuel. More importantly the constant need to land, service and launch the Zeros to defend their carriers precluded respotting these flight decks with the rearmed strike force, thereby saving the American carriers from enduring a major attack.

The timing and sequence of the almost continuous American torpedo squadron attacks resulted in all the Japanese Zeros being at low altitude when the American dive bombers arrived. This allowed the

dive bombers to attack without opposition or losses, greatly improving their accuracy and chances for success.

If VT-3 would not have seen the smoke from VT-6's engagement, it is likely none of the Yorktown Air Group would have found the Japanese carriers. This would have resulted in the survival of the carrier Soryu. It can be assumed Lieutenant Commander McClusky's Enterprise dive bombers would have still found the Japanese carriers as they did. However, had the torpedo bombers not impacted the amount or location of the Japanese CAP, McClusky's attack might have failed or been severely impacted by the CAP resulting in the survival of the Kaga and/or the Akagi.

In summary, Captain Mitscher of the Hornet believed the pilots of his torpedo squadron deserved the MOH. It was not his place to recommend the pilots of VT-3 or VT-6 for this award but it is clear there were no differences between any of these squadrons in regard to their valor and fearlessness. Consequently, it is clear that the pilot of every torpedo plane that attacked the Japanese fleet at Midway met the criteria for the MOH:

- a. Displayed conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his or her own life above and beyond the call of duty.
- b. While engaged in action against an enemy of the United States.
- c. There being no margin of doubt or possibility of error in awarding this award.
- d. That the act must be so outstanding that it clearly distinguishes the award's gallantry above all lesser forms of bravery.
- e. That the award is inherently credit for Extraordinary Heroism (EH) in the line of duty per Tab 17 of Appendix 17 to SECNAV M-1650.1.

The efforts and impacts of Lieutenant Commander Massey's actions during the period of December 7, 1941 to June 4, 1942 exceed the efforts and import of any of the other pilots, excepting the Commanding Officers of Torpedo Squadron Eight and Torpedo Squadron Six, which will be addressed by separate correspondence. The fact his cumulative efforts resulted in the same level of award as all the others (Navy Cross) can, and should be, corrected.

MASSEY, Lance Edward (MISSING)

Lt Comdr USN

US: *Sancti Yorktown*

Midway June 1942

Recommended for NAVY CROSS by CinC Pac Serial 19 CinC Pac
File P15(1) of July 20, 1942—CinC Pac File P15(1)/(05)
Serial 3277 of August 16, 1942.

*no change 1942
Ser. 3594-0112-30-46 App. Adm. Jan*

Awarded: NAVY CROSS--Sept. 11, 1942 Bd.Awds. Meeting
Appr.Sept.17,1942 by Sec.Navy. 7

For extraordinary heroism & distinguished service as Comdr
of VT-3 in Battle of Midway. On June 4, 1942 he led his
squadron in a torpedo attack against Jap naval forces.
In the face of intense anti-aircraft fire & overwhelming
fighter opposition, he continued to press home his attack
with heroic determination beyond the point where it (OVER)

became definitely apparent that in order successfully to carry out his mission he would probably sacrifice his life. In so doing his squadron was enabled to score direct hits on two enemy aircraft carriers which contributed greatly to the decisive victory of our forces. The courage & utter disregard for personal safety, displayed by him in this attack, were in keeping with the highest traditions of the naval service.

1/9/43 Orig. cit and DFC (engraved) sent to next of kin (wife) [REDACTED] Hubbard Grove Ranch Descano, Calif.



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY
(MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS)
1000 NAVY PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20350-1000

February 1, 2022

The Honorable Dusty M. Johnson
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0000

Dear Representative Johnson:

Thank you for your recent letter to the Secretary of the Navy requesting the Medal of Honor (MOH) be awarded posthumously to Lieutenant Commanders Lance Massey, Eugene Lindsey, and John Charles Waldron for their actions in June 1942 during the Battle of Midway. I am responding on behalf of Secretary Del Toro.

Your admiration for these three Naval aviators is understandable. Their heroic and selfless actions, and those of the other aviators in their squadrons, at Midway are widely known, well documented, and universally celebrated. The military decorations they received in recognition of their actions have also been the subject of great interest and scrutiny. A few months after the battle, they were all awarded the prestigious Navy Cross, the Nation's second highest decoration for valor. Many of their fellow squadron mates were also awarded the Navy Cross, the Distinguished Flying Cross, or other prestigious combat medals.

During November 1942, congressional representatives from South Dakota petitioned the Navy to specifically reconsider the case of John Waldron, and award him the MOH. The request was referred to the Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet—Admiral Chester Nimitz at the time. Admiral Nimitz and his staff conducted a thorough review of the matter and concluded the Navy Cross had been the appropriate decoration. His letter of March 1, 1943, to the Chief of Naval Personnel stated, *The Board upon review of other air groups which participated in the Battle of Midway judges that the action of Lieutenant Commander John C. Waldron, U.S. Navy, when reviewed with comparable cases, did not and does not warrant the award of the Congressional Medal of Honor. The Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, appreciates the great services rendered by this officer to the Navy and his country in the Battle of Midway; and that the award of the Navy Cross was based on a comparable performance of duty by other officers in this action. The decision of the Board is therefore approved and the Navy Cross is considered the appropriate award.*

Immediately following the war, the Navy conducted a widespread review of personal and unit decorations made during the war, and specifically reviewed almost 30,000 individual cases in which nominations had resulted in no award or a lower award than originally nominated. Official records confirm that this post-war review board determined the actions of LCDRs Waldron and Massey did not merit award of the MOH. We did not find documents explicitly stating that LCDR Lindsey's case was reconsidered, but it is reasonable to presume that his actions were known and used as comparison for the other reviews. In 1942, all of these awards were routed through Admiral Nimitz's office, and favorably endorsed to the Secretary of the

Navy for award of the Navy Cross. Therefore, when the Pacific Fleet Board of Awards reviewed LCDR Waldron's case a few months later, it is certain LCDR Lindsey's nomination was in their files and was among the *comparable cases* with which LCDR Waldron's actions were examined.

Department of Defense regulations preclude reconsideration of any previously approved military decoration, or previously considered and disapproved award nomination, for upgrade to the MOH unless new, substantive, and materially relevant evidence is presented that was not reasonably available when the original nomination was considered. The regulations clarify that new evidence that merely adds details to what was previously provided will not meet the new and relevant requirement. Examples of acceptable evidence include official reports and eyewitness testimony. Without such new evidence, the Department can take no further action on these cases.

This determination in no way diminishes the heroism of these three men, or the Navy's pride and gratitude for having men such as them in our ranks. Their bravery and total devotion to duty continue to inspire generations of Sailors and particularly our Naval aviators.

Thank you for writing the Secretary, and for your continued support of America's Navy. If I can be of any further assistance, please let me know.

Sincerely,

2/1/2022

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Acting CORB Counsel

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By direction